

OHR SRT News Summary, 7 Nov. 1997

Headlines

- Bilateral Serb-Austrian and Serb-French talks in Banja Luka
- Germany- the strongest advocator of the idea of the SFOR presence being extended in BiH
- The Banja Luka University gets one more high-level institution – the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics
- “Welt” claims that Muslim fundamentalists still train on ranges in Muslim-controlled parts of the BH Federation

The RS President, Biljana Plavsic, received the respective Ambassadors of Austria and France in BH, Valentin ..., and Yves Godelle in Banja Luka today. The two separate meetings discussed the forthcoming parliamentary elections and the current economic situation in the RS. After the meeting with President Plavsic, the Austrian Ambassador stated that technical support would shortly be offered to the RS to ensure the beginning of joint investments in profitable projects.

01:07

The RS President met with representatives of the Association of Serb Fallen Soldiers from Prijedor in Banja Luka today. (Ranko Savic, a representative of the Association) “We broke away from the Association of RS Fighters because we were not satisfied with its work, and we decided to establish associations of killed Serb soldiers at municipal level instead. At the meeting, President Plavsic promised that after the election of the new Government and the new Parliament, our Association would be officially recognized by the state.” One of the issues discussed was a never kept promise by the RS Government to fund the erection of tombstones for all Serb troops from the area of Prijedor that were killed during the war.

01:47

Greek “902 Radio” today described the possibility of the RS Army getting involved in the Train and Equip Program as a two-edge knife. According to 902 Radio, after having armed the BH Federation Army heavily, the American now plan to get the considerably weakened RS Army involved as well. The Radio claims that while the BH Federation Army has recently received large amounts of weaponry, the RS Army was, under the Dayton Agreement, forced to destroy its weaponry, which has significantly affected the balance of military forces. Radio concluded that the uncontrolled arms deliveries for the BH Federation Army by the United States and by a number of Islamic countries could likely boomerang on them.

00:59

(“Tanjug” report) Germany currently appears to be amongst the strongest advocators of the idea of SFOR troops remaining in BH after the expiration of their current mandate. However, Klaus Kinkels’ recent visit to the United States has apparently not yielded any fruits, as the Americans have still not made the final decision in this regard. American diplomats seem to have given different answers to Kinkel’s proposal though. German analysts agree that Kinkel’s visit to the United States has only opened a new debate on the matter and has speeded up the decision-making process.

The German Foreign Minister, Ruehe, recently stated that his country would take over key military functions not only in BH but also at the NATO South European HQ in one year. The NATO mission in BH should, therefore, be regarded as an excuse for far more ambitious political interests and military enterprises.

01:37

After meeting Carlos Westendorp at the Sarajevo airport today, the NATO Secretary General, Javier Solana, departed for Belgrade to meet with President Milosevic of Serbia.

00:20

The dissolved RS Parliament last night held a session in the Jahorina mountain. The session removed Petar Cancar

as a Judge of the RS Supreme Court and also as the President of the RS State Election Commission. The Serb National Union today released a statement in reaction to the session. The statement condemned the statement by Dragan Kalinic saying that the session had been held behind closed doors due to persistent threats by Plavsic's supporters against those MPs who continue to attend sessions of the Parliament. The statement explained that the reason for this was actually to hide the lack of quorum.

02:14

The Democratic Party for Banja Luka and Krajina, at a press conference in Banja Luka today, stressed that the current RS leadership was leading the RS into a disaster. Nikola Spiric, the President of the Party, stressed that his Party would be the only regional party that would obtain seats at the RS Parliament.

00:36

The Serb Peasants' Party today strongly condemned the distribution of leaflets by the Serb Krajina Movement of Resistance that feed people's nationalist feelings. Gordana Vidovic, the President of the Party, confirmed that the Party would run in the elections independently.

00:24

The Movement of Democratic Transformation of the RS today released a statement saying that the decision by the PEC to reject their election participation application was in violation of election rules and regulations.

00:15

Following the failure to establish the local Municipal Assembly in Banja Luka, the SDS Municipal Board today appealed to those local political parties which had obtained the largest number of seats in the Assembly to eventually agree on the issue of the local Mayor and establish necessary municipal bodies.

00:24

The local Municipal Assembly was established in Prijedor today. The SDS candidate, Borislav Mandic, was re-elected as the Mayor of Prijedor. While representatives of the Coalition for the Integral and Democratic BH did arrive in Prijedor, they refused to take part in the work of the session. Maric explained that they did not agree with the decision to play the RS anthem at the beginning of the session or to sign the solemn oath proposed by OSCE. Maric scheduled the next session of the Assembly for Thursday, 13 November.

03:16

The constitutive session of the local Municipal Assembly was held in Vukoslavlje today. The session was attended by 18 deputies from the SDS and by representatives from SFOR and OSCE. 18 representatives of the Coalition for the Integral and Democratic BH failed to attend the session. The present deputies first took the solemn oath, after which they elected the Mayor of Vukoslavlje and the Secretary of the Municipality. Jovisa Kovacevic was re-appointed as the Mayor of the town.

After his election, Kovacevic stated that the present deputies along with OSCE representatives agreed that should representatives from the Coalition continue to refuse to attend sessions of the Assembly, OSCE would, then, inform Robert Frowick on the matter.

01:37

A press conference was held in Banja Luka today where Zoran Skrbic, an employee of the Banja Luka Public Security Center, was identified as the perpetrator of the recent assassination attempt against Josip Antunovic, a boxer from Banja Luka. The second round of the conference disclosed specifics regarding illegal trade activities in the territory of the RS. Jovan Zametica, the former advisor for the former RS President, Radovan Karzdic, was thus accused of taking away large amounts of foreign money from the Serb people and also of placing those on bank accounts abroad. On the issue of uniforms for police officers belonging to the break-away RS Ministry of Interior, the Deputy RS Minister of Interior, Predrag Jesuric, confirmed that the funds had been provided for those and that the uniforms were the same ones as those being used by police officers in Serbia.

01:36

NATO finally cleared the shipment of 126 American mortars for the BH Federation Army that had arrived in Croatia 8 days ago. The decision came after assurances had been given by the two federal partners that large amounts of weaponry had been destroyed.

00:18

Drago Bilandzija, the BH Federation Minister of Finance, in an interview to the Sarajevo-based "Oslobodjenje" daily newspaper today, confirmed that reports by international experts claiming financial machinations and frauds worth DM 43 million were correct. Bilandzija went on to disclose that international donations and credits worth U.S. \$ 30 million had also been misused to pay off BH Federation foreign debts.

00:49